

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

105th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 1

January 22, 1997, 2:17 pm
Page S-617 Temp. Record

ALBRIGHT NOMINATION/Secretary of State

SUBJECT: Madeleine Korbel Albright, of the District of Columbia, to be Secretary of State. Confirmation.

ACTION: NOMINATION CONFIRMED, 99-0

SYNOPSIS: Madeleine Korbel Albright was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia. She received a BA in Political Science from Wellesley College and her Masters and Doctorate from Columbia University's Department of Public Law and Government. Her employment history includes the following: Chief Legislative Assistant to Senator Muskie; Staff Member on the National Security Council and White House Staff Member; Fellow, Woodrow Wilson Center; Senior Fellow, Center for Strategic and International Studies; Professor, Georgetown University; President, Center for National Policy; and United States Ambassador to the United Nations (1993-present).

Those favoring confirmation contended:

Ambassador Albright's personal history, her academic research and writing, her diplomatic experience, and her political acumen place her among the few people in America who are well qualified to serve as Secretary of State. Her sterling performance over the past 4 years as Ambassador to the United Nations, where she forcefully advanced United States' interests, gives us confidence that she will do well in this post. On these bases alone we would vote to confirm her, as we would vote to confirm any similarly qualified nominee. Certainly many of us, especially those of us who are Republicans, may disagree with her on specific policies, but the President should have leeway to select Administration officials with whom he is in philosophical agreement. Those of us who are Republicans note also that the President could easily have selected a qualified nominee with views far to the left of those held by Ambassador Albright. She was twice forced to flee her native land of Czechoslovakia, first as a result of the Nazi occupation, then 10 years later after the communist coup. Her first-hand experience with the two worst forms of tyranny this century--Nazi socialism and communism--have taught her the importance of standing firm against aggressors who seek to subvert freedom. She has never been, nor will she ever be, an apologist for any form of totalitarianism. Further, Republicans who strongly oppose ceding any

(See other side)

YEAS (99)				NAYS (0)		NOT VOTING (1)	
Republican (55 or 100%)		Democrats (44 or 100%)		Republicans (0 or 0%)	Democrats (0 or 0%)	Republicans (0)	Democrats (1)
Abraham	Hutchinson	Akaka	Inouye				Rockefeller- ²
Allard	Hutchison	Baucus	Johnson				
Ashcroft	Inhofe	Biden	Kennedy				
Bennett	Jeffords	Bingaman	Kerrey				
Bond	Kempthorne	Boxer	Kerry				
Brownback	Kyl	Breaux	Kohl				
Burns	Lott	Bryan	Landrieu				
Campbell	Lugar	Bumpers	Lautenberg				
Chafee	Mack	Byrd	Leahy				
Coats	McCain	Cleland	Levin				
Cochran	McConnell	Conrad	Lieberman				
Collins	Murkowski	Daschle	Mikulski				
Coverdell	Nickles	Dodd	Moseley-Braun				
Craig	Roberts	Dorgan	Moynihan				
D'Amato	Roth	Durbin	Murray				
DeWine	Santorum	Feingold	Reed				
Domenici	Sessions	Feinstein	Reid				
Enzi	Shelby	Ford	Robb				
Faircloth	Smith, Bob	Glenn	Sarbanes				
Frist	Smith, Gordon	Graham	Torricelli				
Gorton	Snowe	Harkin	Wellstone				
Gramm	Specter	Hollings	Wyden				
Grams	Stevens						
Grassley	Thomas						
Gregg	Thompson						
Hagel	Thurmond						
Hatch	Warner						
Helms							

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

sovereignty to the United Nations, and who especially oppose ceding any military authority, should be at least partially reassured that Ambassador Albright has indicated that she has learned from the mistakes made in Somalia (in Somalia a U.S. military mission was changed, without congressional approval, from a humanitarian peacekeeping operation to a poorly defined exercise in "nation building" with U.S. troops under United Nation's control; 29 U.S. Rangers who had been denied, for political reasons, military equipment that had been requested for them and that they needed for their safety, were killed in that exercise). She testified that as Secretary of State she will "never advise using American forces where other means are available, where there is not the support of Congress and the people, where there is not a possibility of or where there is no exit strategy, and where there is not the likelihood or the reality of winning." On an institutional note, all Senators should be delighted with her nomination because she is capable and willing to give a direct answer to a direct question, which makes her priceless among diplomats. State Department officials, we can attest to from all-too-frequent experience, have a unique ability to respond at length to virtually any question while carefully leaving the question unanswered. We expect that Madeleine Albright's candor will help Congress fulfill its constitutional responsibilities in foreign policy. Finally, we are pleased to have the opportunity to vote for a woman to be Secretary of State. The symbolism of having a woman as the United States' top diplomat will resonate around the world, and will help change the perception held by many people, both here and abroad, that only men are capable of serving well in such positions of authority. As was once noted, "It is great in politics when conscience and convenience cross paths." Now is such an occasion. We are pleased to vote in favor of confirmation.

While favoring confirmation, some Senators expressed the following reservations:

We respect the President's prerogative to choose Cabinet officers who will faithfully and diligently execute the Administration's policies even when we disagree with those officers' views. On this basis alone we will vote to confirm Ambassador Albright. We do not support the views of this nominee, whom we think will continue the same misguided, damaging "foreign policy" that President Clinton has pursued for the past 4 years.

The reality is that this Administration has not had a foreign policy. It has drifted aimlessly from disaster to disaster, responding to each in an ad hoc fashion. Neither the United States' allies nor its enemies know how the United States will respond to particular types of world events because there has been no rhyme or reason to how it has been responding in the past 4 years. In Haiti, a tiny Caribbean country in which the United States has no vital interests, President Clinton felt compelled to send in U.S. troops to replace one group of thugs with another. The Administration still boasts of this operation, which at last count has cost \$2 billion, as a great foreign policy accomplishment. After Haiti the list goes on and on: from Bosnia, where the United States subcontracted to the terrorist regime in Iran its responsibilities to help the Bosnians defend against genocide; to China, where vacillation led Beijing to believe it could get away with bullying Taiwan; to North Korea, where a multibillion-dollar bribe was given to North Korea to get it to agree to stop its nuclear weapons program (that after it had repeatedly violated numerous earlier agreements to do so); to Somalia, where an uncertain, morphing United States' policy resulted in the tragic and unnecessary deaths of 18 American Rangers; to Iraq, where our CIA Director himself admitted that Saddam Hussein is now politically stronger than ever.

At the start of his first Administration, President Clinton inherited a country that was the undisputed leader of the free world. Thanks to the 12 years of leadership provided by Presidents Reagan and Bush, the United States was respected by its allies and feared by its enemies. That legacy has been squandered by President Clinton. The only defining feature of his foreign policy, the belief that foreign policy should be conducted by binding consensus among nations, has been largely (and thankfully) abandoned in the area it counts most--military force. "Assertive multilateralism," as it was called by Ambassador Albright, dropped out of favor after the debacle in Somalia. In our opinion, the entire concept of binding consensus is flawed. The idea that the United States, a free, democratic nation, should cede a portion of its sovereignty to the consensus opinion of other nations, many of which are totalitarian and despotic, is highly offensive and constitutionally questionable.

Now that President Clinton no longer champions sending Americans to fight and die when other countries vote that they ought to, he has offered a new standard under which he will be willing to commit U.S. troops to a conflict: "Where our interests are clear, our values are at stake, and where we can make a difference, we must act and we must lead." Madeleine Albright repeated this hopelessly vague standard verbatim at her confirmation hearing. "Where our interests are clear"--we could have an interest anywhere--"where are values are at stake"--our values could be said to be at stake anywhere in the world--and "where we can make a difference"--we trust our President would not send troops into harm's way unless he thought they could make a difference. In essence, the United States does not have a foreign policy; both President Clinton and Ambassador Albright apparently intend to continue to respond to world events on an ad hoc basis. We think that this course is reckless and dangerous, but the President has the right to follow it. Therefore, we will vote in favor of confirmation.

No arguments were expressed in opposition to confirmation.